What is claimed is:

1. A method for configuring a telemetry unit to enable communication between an external device and an implantable medical device comprising the steps of:

(a)   identifying at least one appropriate telemetry protocol for use with the implantable medical device;

(b)   loading from memory a protocol driver associated with one of the identified telemetry protocols;

(c)   installing the protocol driver within the telemetry unit; and

(d)   initiating telemetric communication between the telemetry unit and the implantable medical device in accordance with the identified telemetry protocol.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of installing the protocol driver includes the steps of: (i) identifying from the telemetry module already installed protocol drivers; and (ii) comparing the protocol driver with the already installed protocol drivers to determine whether the protocol driver has already been installed.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of installing the protocol driver further includes the step of: (iii) determining whether the telemetry module can install another protocol driver.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of installing the protocol driver further includes the step of: (iv) if the telemetry module can install another protocol driver, installing the protocol driver; and (v) if the telemetry module cannot install another protocol driver, uninstalling an already installed protocol driver and then installing the protocol driver.

5. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 1.

6. A system for communicating with an implantable medical device comprising in combination:

(a)   a telemetry unit for providing telemetric communication with an implanted device; and

(b)   a host device in communication with the telemetry unit having stored therein an
        application for use with the implanted medical device and a base module platform
        software for configuring the telemetry unit with a protocol driver to operate with an
        appropriate telemetry protocol.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the host device is a physician programmer.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein the host device is a patient programmer.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein the host device is a general-purpose computing device.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the general-purpose computing device is selected from
the group consisting of a personal computer, a laptop computer, and a hand-held device.

11. A configurable telemetry unit for communicating with an implantable medical device
comprising in combination:

(a)   a host interface for receiving a protocol driver to enable communication with the
        implantable medical device in accordance with a telemetry protocol recognized by
        the implantable medical device;

(b)   an operating system for performing secondary operations for installing a protocol
        driver;

(c)   an antenna for transferring signals to and from the implantable medical device via
        telemetry; and

(d)   a protocol driver interface for receiving a signal from the protocol driver, generating
        a transmit signal having parameters specified by the protocol driver, and providing
        the transmit signal to the antenna.